

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MC-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /068 R

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APPROVED BY NEA/ARP:FMDICKMAN

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P 242248Z PEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN ABOUT BILL BANNING ARMS SALES TO GULF

REF: JIDDA 1287

1. EMBASSY SHOULD DRAW TO MAS'UD'S ATTENTION STATEMENT
MADE BY UNDER SECRETARY SISCO IN "MEET THE PRESS"
PROGRAM -(STATE 40707) ON US MILITARY SALES POLICY TO
PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES.

2. FOLLOWING IS THE PRESS GUIDANCE THAT WAS PREPARED FOR
TODAY'S NOON BRIEFING. SUBJECT WAS NOT RAISED.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE DEPT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SENATOR
KENNEDY'S RESOLUTION FOR A SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON SALES
OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES TO PERSIAN GULF COUN-
TRIES?

ANSWER: -- BOTH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND UNDER SECRETARY
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SISCO ALREADY ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO THAT QUESTION YESTERDAY.

-- LET ME REPEAT THE MAIN POINTS THAT WERE MADE:

(A) OUR ARMS SALES TO THIS AREA HAVE NOT BEEN DONE WILLY-

NILLY, OR ON AN AD HOC BASIS.

(B) WE HAVE A WELL THOUGHT OUT POLICY WHICH GREW OUT OF THE TERMINATION BY THE BRITISH IN 1968 OF THEIR SPECIAL TREATY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE GULF.

(C) POLICY STUDIES WHICH WE CONDUCTED AS A RESULT OF THAT BRITISH DECISION HAD TO ADDRESS WHETHER WE SHOULD FILL THE VOID DIRECTLY OR UNDERTAKE A POLICY OF HELPING THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH REALLY HAVE LEGITIMATE SECURITY INTERESTS AND NEED FOR ARMS FOR SELF-DEFENSE PURPOSES.

(D) WE CONCLUDED THAT THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED WAS THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION RELYING PRIMARILY ON IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, BOTH MODERATE STATES AND WITH WHOM WE HAVE HAD MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS GOING BACK TO WORLD WAR II.

-- IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF WHETHER WE PROVIDE THESE ARMS OR NO ARMS GO INTO THE GULF AREA. IT IS A QUESTION OF WHETHER THESE COUNTRIES, WHICH PERCEIVE A REAL DANGER TO THEIR SECURITY FROM COUNTRIES SUPPORTED BY THE SOVIET UNION, ARE ABLE TO PURCHASE MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM US OR FROM SOMEONE ELSE.

-- THIS POLICY HAS BEEN EXPLAINED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS BEFORE VARIOUS CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES, BEGINNING WITH MR. SISCO'S TESTIMONY ON AUGUST 8, 1972 AND JUNE 6, 1973 WHEN HE WAS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, AND THE MOST RECENT BEING ON AUGUST 7, 1974 BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

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-- THEREFORE, WE DO NOT AGREE WITH THE IDEA OF A MORATORIUM ON ARMS SALES TO COUNTRIES IN THE GULF.

QUESTION: WELL WHAT ABOUT OUR ARMS SALES POLICIES TO THE SMALLER COUNTRIES IN THE GULF LIKE KUWAIT AND OMAN?

ANSWER; WHAT I SAID ABOVE APPLIES TO THESE COUNTRIES
AS WELL. LET ME POINT OUT THAT THE SECRETARY IN HIS
PRESS CONFERENCE OF JANUARY 28 ADDRESSED THE PRINCIPLES
UNDERLYING THE BASIS FOR OUR DECISION TO SELL ARMS TO
THESE AREAS IN EACH CASE. KISSINGER

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, LEGISLATIVE BILLS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE041678
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FMDICKMAN:CEJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750065-0445
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750284/aaaagpjpg.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 JIDDA 1287
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <01 DEC 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971007
Subject: SAUDI CONCERN ABOUT BILL BANNING ARMS SALES TO GULF
TAGS: PFOR, SA, US
To: DHAHRAN
JIDDA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006